State Government of Maharashtra for the last three years (2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009) for UIDSSMT are as follows:—

Year	Number of projects for which ACA was released	No. of towns covered	Cost of Sanctioned projects (Rs. in lakh)	ACA admissible (Rs. in lakh)	ACA released (Rs. in lakh) (till 31.3.2009)
2006-2007	21	15	33644.50	26915.60	14894.22
2007-2008	5	4	19739.00	15791.20	8980.25
2008-2009	68	67	216621.39	173297.11	86337.03

The ACA given by the Central Government are project-specific, and no instances have come to the notice of the Ministry of Urban Development about diversion of ACA by the State Government of Maharashtra for purposes other than for which these were released. All State Governments are required to furnish utilization certificates as per prescribed schedule for claiming further installments of releases of ACA, and the State Government of Maharashtra has also been sending such utilization certificates, only on receipt of which further releases of ACA are being made.

Rain water harvesting

*285. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) when was the concept of rain water harvesting introduced in the country;

(b) whether any scientific advancements have been introduced in the concept since then;

(c) whether Government has made any assessments about the gains from this concept;

(d) if so, the details in this regard;

(e) whether any scientific advancements are proposed to be added to the concept; and

(f) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Rain Water Harvesting in India is an old tradition. Rain water harvesting was traditionally used for water storage. Now, Rain Water Harvesting is also being used for augmentation of ground water recharge. Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), first took up the scheme of Rain Water Harvesting during the Fifth Five Year Plan. There has been continuous improvement and scientific advancement, in designs of harvesting structures and techniques of ground water

recharge. CGWB has employed advanced techniques of water spreading, injection well recharge and subsurface dykes for artificial recharge to ground water.

The impact assessment of demonstrative recharge projects carried out by Central Ground Water Board has revealed rise in ground water level in the range of 0.15 to 12 meter in different parts of the country.

(e) to (f) A demonstrative scheme on "Rain Water Harvesting and Artificial Recharge of Ground Water" has been sanctioned during Eleventh Five Year Plan. The scheme includes further development of area specific rain water harvesting and recharge methodologies as its objective.

Outcome of visit of Indian officials to Sri Lanka

*286. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Security Advisor and India's Foreign Secretary visited Sri Lanka to secure a ceasefire in the war torn Sri Lanka, between Government forces and the Tamils;

(b) if so, the outcome of their visit indicating details of the ceasefire agreement brought about;

(c) whether Government has taken cognizance of internally displaced Tamil population there; and

(d) if so, in what way Government is helping so that they settle back in their homes at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (d) The National Security Advisor and Foreign Secretary visited Colombo on April 24, 2009 to convey India's concerns about the situation in Northern Sri Lanka, particularly at the casualties caused among Tamil civilians as a result of ongoing operations. Following their visit, on April 27, 2009, Sri Lanka announced conclusion of combat operations and end to the use of heavy weapons, combat aircraft and aerial weapons which could cause civilian casualties. Sri Lankan Forces were to confine their attempts to rescue the civilians.

The National Security Advisor and Foreign Secretary visited Sri Lanka again on May 20-21, 2009 after the end of military operations and held talks with the Sri Lankan Government. The necessity of reaching a lasting political settlement was emphasized. They stressed that the Sri Lankan Government must focus attention on the issues of relief, rehabilitation, resettlement, and reconciliation. The President and Government of Sri Lanka have assured that Sri Lanka is resolved to resettle most of the displaced persons in their original homes within six months.

In addition to the humanitarian assistance provided to the Internally Displaced Tamil population in Northern Sri Lanka so far, the Government of India has earmarked Rs. 500 crores